IN THE CLAIMS:

Please find below a listing of all of the pending claims. The statuses of the claims are set forth in parentheses.

1.   (Currently Amended) A method of responding to a request in a distributed system, said distributed system including a plurality of hosts, wherein each host is operable to respond to at least one type of request, the method comprising steps of:

receiving a multicasted message, said message including a request;

determining if ~~a type of~~ said request is of a first type or a second type; ~~and~~

responding to said request if said request is of the first type ~~based on said type of said request; and~~

ignoring said request if said request is of the second type.

2.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising a step of designating a subset of said plurality of hosts for said first and second ~~each~~ types of request.

3.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim 2, wherein said step of responding further comprises a step of a host of said plurality of hosts responding to said request in response to said host being included in a subset for said first type of said request.

4.   (Original) The method of claim 3, wherein said step of responding further comprises a step of determining whether responding to said request includes providing a state-changing response.

5. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 4, wherein said step of responding further comprises steps of:

generating multiple responses from multiple hosts in said subset for said first type of said request;

transmitting said multiple responses to a client in response to said responding including a non-state-changing-response; and

synchronizing said multiple responses in response to said responding including a state-changing-response.

6. (Original) The method of claim 5, wherein said step of synchronizing further comprises a step of designating a synchronizing host operable to facilitate transmitting one of said multiple responses to said client.

7. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 6, wherein said step of synchronizing further comprises steps of:

transmitting a message to each host in said subset for said first type of said request, said message indicating that a response has been transmitted to said client; and

deleting said request from a queue for each host receiving said message.

8. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein said first and second types of requests includes one of a meta data request and a data request.

9.   (Currently Amended) A distributed system comprising:

        a plurality of hosts, each host being included in a subset of hosts operable to respond

to a at least a first or second type of request; wherein each host is operable to receive a

multicasted message including a request, determine whether the request is of the first or

second type a type of said request, and respond to the first type of request while ignoring the

second type of request. said request based on said type of said request.

10.   (Currently Amended) The distributed system of claim 9, wherein multiple hosts in a

subset for said first type of said request responds to the first type of said request.

11.   (Currently Amended) The distributed system of claim 10, wherein said multiple hosts

in said subset for said first type of said request determines whether responding to said request

includes providing a state-changing response.

12.   (Currently Amended) The distributed system of claim 11, wherein said subset for said

first type of said request includes a synchronization host, said synchronization host is

operable to facilitate transmitting a single response to a client in response to said multiple

hosts in said subset generating a state-changing response.

13.   (Original) The distributed system of claim 12, wherein said multiple hosts in said

subset transmit a response to said client in response to said multiple hosts in said subset

generating a non-state-changing response.

14.   (Currently Amended) The ~~method~~distributed system of claim 9, wherein said first and second type of requests includes one of a meta data request and a data request.

15.   (Currently Amended) A computer readable medium on which is embedded a program, the program performing a method of responding to a request in a distributed system, said distributed system including a plurality of hosts, wherein each host is operable to respond to at least one type of request, the method comprising steps of:

receiving a multicasted message, said message including a request;

determining if ~~a type of~~ said request is of a first type or a second type; ~~and~~

responding to said request if said request is of the first type~~based on said type of said request~~; and

ignoring said request if said request is of the second type.

16.   (Currently Amended) The computer readable medium of claim 15, wherein said method further comprises a step of designating a subset of said plurality of hosts for said first and second ~~each~~ types of request.

17.   (Currently Amended) The computer readable medium of claim 16, wherein said step of responding further comprises a step of a host of said plurality of hosts responding to said request in response to said host being included in a subset for said first type of said request.

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18. (Original) The computer readable medium of claim 17, wherein said step of responding further comprises a step of determining whether responding to said request includes providing a state-changing response.

19. (Currently Amended) The computer readable medium of claim 18, wherein said step of responding further comprises steps of:

generating multiple responses from multiple hosts in said subset for said first type of said request;

transmitting said multiple responses to a client in response to said responding including a non-state-changing-response; and

synchronizing said multiple responses in response to said responding including a state-changing-response.

20. (Currently Amended) The computer readable medium of claim 15, wherein said first and second types of requests includes one of a meta data request and a data request.

21. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein receiving a multicasted message comprises receiving a multicasted message via a network in the distributed system.

22. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 4, wherein the state-changing response includes changing a state of data stored in the host.

23.   (Previously Presented) The distributed system of claim 9, wherein the plurality of

hosts are connected to at least one network in the distributed system and are operable to

receive the multicasted message via the at least one network.

24.   (Previously Presented) The distributed system of claim 11, wherein the state-changing

response includes changing a state of data stored in a host in the subset.

25.   (Previously Presented) The computer readable medium of claim 15, wherein receiving

a multicasted message comprises receiving a multicasted message via a network in the

distributed system.

26.   (Previously Presented) The computer readable medium of claim 18, wherein the state-

changing response includes changing a state of data stored in the host.

27.   (Currently Amended) A node in a network comprising:

    means for receiving a multicasted message via the network, said message including a

request;

    means for determining whether ~~a type of~~ said request is of a first or second type; and

    means for responding to said first type of said request and not responding to said

second type of ~~based on said type of~~ said request.

28.   (Currently Amended) The node of claim 27, wherein the means for responding further comprises means for responding to said request in response to said node being included in a subset of nodes operable to respond to the first type of said request.

29.   (Previously Presented) The node of claim 27, further comprising means for synchronizing a response with at least one response to the request from another node if the response includes a state-changing-response changing the state of data stored in the node.